



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR GINA M. RAIMONDO

GINA M. RAIMONDO, GOVERNOR

March 13, 2015

Eileen Sobeck
Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway, Room 14636
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Nominations for New England Fishery Management Council – Rhode Island Obligatory Seat

Dear Ms. Sobeck:

I write in response to your letter of January 28, 2015, seeking nominees for two New England Fishery Management Council seats, which will become vacant on August 10, 2015.

I am forwarding you the nomination packages for four highly qualified candidates from Rhode Island for the Rhode Island obligatory seat: Theodore Platz, Eric Reid, Donald Fox, and Gregory Mataronas.

Having carefully considered the qualifications of each of the four candidates, I respectfully recommend the appointment of Mr. Platz.

Theodore Platz has nearly 30 years of experience as a commercial fisherman, including several years working as a deckhand for fish trap and lobster operations, several years as captain of an inshore lobster boat, and since 1994, as the owner and operator of commercial vessels engaged in lobstering and gill netting for monkfish, skate, and dogfish. In recent years, Mr. Platz has expanded his company – Ocean Harvest, Inc. operating out of Newport, RI – to include a fleet of three commercial vessels and two refrigeration trucks; his company also serves as a federally permitted fisheries dealer.

Mr. Platz has a B.A. degree in Economic Theory from Emory and Henry College. He has participated in the Gulf of Maine Research Institute's Marine Resources Education Program, and served as a moderator for the Program. In 2006, Mr. Platz formed the Rhode Island Monkfishermen's Association, and has continued to serve as President of the Association since its inception. He is a member of the Commercial Fisheries Center of Rhode Island, and recently served as the President of that organization, whose membership includes most of the commercial fishing organizations in Rhode Island.

Mr. Platz has been deeply involved in marine fisheries issues pertaining to the New England Council for over nine years. He has been appointed by the Council to serve on the Council's Research Steering Committee, Skate Advisory Panel, and Monkfish Advisory Panel, and was recently named Chairman of the latter. He is a regular attendee at Council meetings, and regularly contributes to Council discussions and deliberations.

In addition to a strong resume, Mr. Platz has the knowledge, energy, and fortitude to function effectively in the very challenging arena of marine fisheries management in the New England region. He has many ideas on how the management system can be improved, and is not shy about advancing them. He is conservation minded, understands the needs and interests of the fishing industry, and recognizes the importance of managing fishery resources on the basis of sound science and with a view to long-term sustainability.

I am impressed by the solid support for Mr. Platz's candidacy offered by an array of interests associated with Rhode Island's commercial fishing industry. He is clearly well-regarded among his peers. I received strong letters of support for Mr. Platz from both the Rhode Island Commercial Fishermen's Association (Christopher Brown, President), and The Town Dock, Narragansett, RI (Ryan Clark, Vice-President).

The other three nominees I am submitting for the Rhode Island obligatory seat are also strong candidates.

Eric Reid has actively participated in commercial and recreational fisheries in Rhode Island for 42 years. He first worked as a deckhand on for-hire vessels, then became licensed and ran the vessels as a captain. He did this while attending the University of Rhode Island, from which he graduated in 1981 with an A.S. degree in Fisheries and Marine Technology. Following graduation, he began working as a commercial fisherman, serving as both deckhand and captain on bottom trawl and longline vessels operating out of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and New Jersey ports.

After 10 years of experience on the water, Mr. Reid redirected his fisheries focus to shoreside processing. Since 1983, he has worked for seven different seafood processing companies. After brief stints with the Tri-Coastal Co-Op in Gloucester, MA and the Atlantic Coast Fisheries Corp. in New Bedford, MA, he began working as Production Manager and Plant Manager for several Rhode Island-based companies: Point Judith Packing Co.; Seafresh USA, Inc.; and The Town Dock, Inc. Having established himself as an industry leader in Rhode Island's premier fishing port, Mr. Reid then started his own business in Galilee – Deep Sea Fish of Rhode Island, Inc. – which he owned and operated for eleven years, through 2013. His facility was a full-service vessel unloading facility and fresh fish production plant, and was one of the most active operations in the port. Since 2013, Mr. Reid has served as General Manager at Seafreeze Shoreside, Inc., a large, full-service seafood processing facility in Galilee.

Throughout his long and successful career, Mr. Reid has also taken the time to engage in the fisheries management process. A strong advocate for the industry, and for sound resource conservation, he has served in leadership roles in numerous capacities – as (past) president of both the Rhode Island Seafood Council and the American Seafood Institute, and as the founding member of both the East Coast Fisheries Association and the New England Seafood Producers Association. He has contributed to numerous marine fisheries policy initiatives in Rhode Island, and he has testified on fisheries issues at the Rhode Island State House. At the federal level, Mr. Reid is engaged via his regular participation in meetings of the New England Fisheries Management Council, and his membership on the Mackerel, Squid, and Butterfish Advisory Panel for the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council.

Mr. Reid has the experience, smarts, poise, and thoughtfulness to serve the interests of the New England Council well. He has a firm grasp on the issues, he is immersed in the Rhode Island commercial fishery and is well-regarded by his peers, and he has a personality and sensibility ideally suited to the challenging task of being a Council member. He is an impressive candidate, and I am proud to include him as part of the Rhode Island slate.

Mr. Reid has been highly recommended for the seat by the Rhode Island Fishermen's Alliance (Richard Fuka, President).

Donald Fox has been deeply involved in commercial fishing in southern New England for 32 years. He began working as a deckhand, worked his way up to captain, and ultimately became part-owner of a major commercial dragger, operating out of Galilee, RI. An experienced bottom-trawler, Mr. Fox has long been a fixture, and influential member, of the Rhode Island commercial fishing community. After many years at sea, he recently transitioned to the role of Fleet Manager for The Town Dock, one of the premier seafood processing companies/facilities in Galilee. In this capacity, he is responsible for the maintenance, business, and fishing operations for the company's six commercial vessels. Mr. Fox has also been a member of Northeast Groundfish Sector V since 2010, and currently serves on the Sector's Board of Directors.

Mr. Fox completed the Marine Resource Education Program (Gulf of Maine Research Institute) in 2013. For many years, he has been a member of the Rhode Island Fishermen's Alliance. Over the past twenty years, he has served with distinction as a member of the Rhode Island Marine Fishery Council's Advisory Panel for Summer Flounder, Scup, and Black Sea Bass. He is a regular attendee at meetings of both the New England and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Councils.

Mr. Fox offers both a wealth of experience, and a pragmatic view of the issues facing the New England Council. He has spent the majority of his life chasing, and catching, fish; now, he is coming forward with a sincere desire to refocus his fisheries interests in the management arena. Mr. Fox is well-respected in the commercial fishing community, and maintains excellent working relationships with the harvest and the processing sectors of the industry. He, too, is an impressive candidate, and I am equally proud to include him as part of the Rhode Island slate.

Gregory Mataronas embodies the future of marine fisheries. He is relatively young, bright, level-headed, and well-versed on a wide range of marine fisheries issues. His age notwithstanding, he has fished his entire life, and already has some 25 years of experience. He comes from a fishing family, so he was able to get his start in the business at a very young age. Much of his early experience involved lobster fishing. He then branched out, still as a trap fisherman, into whelk, sea bass, and scup. He captained two different offshore lobster boats at various times since 2003. Recently, he entered into a partnership with his brother, and is now the co-owner of a major fishing business involving a gillnet vessel that primarily targets monkfish, skates, and summer flounder.

Mr. Mataronas has a strong educational background. He graduated Magna cum laude from Southampton College/Long Island University in 2003 with a B.S. in Marine Biology. He then worked his way through the University of Rhode Island's Masters Program in Aquaculture (thesis and degree pending). Recently, he completed the Marine Resource Education Program (Gulf of Maine Research Institute).

Rounding out his strong background, Mr. Mataronas has been deeply immersed in fisheries policy and management. He serves on the New England Fishery Management Council's Skate Advisory Panel. He is a member of the Board of the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation, based in Kingston, RI. He serves as an officer with three organizations: the Rhode Island Lobstermen's Association, Rhode Island Monkfishermen's Association, and the Sakonnet Point Fishermen's Association. He also serves on the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's Area 2 Lobster Conservation Management Team. He has engaged in several collaborative fisheries research projects. He is a regular attendee at New England Fishery Management Council and Rhode Island Fishery Management Council meetings, and reliably offers thoughtful and meaningful input on pending management issues.

Mr. Mataronas is well-known, well-liked, and well-respected throughout the Rhode Island commercial fishing community. His candidacy for a seat on the New England Council received a letter of support from the Rhode Island Monkfishermen's Association (Ted Platz, President).

With his breadth of experience, education, energy, and commitment, Mr. Mataronas is well-positioned for a promising future as both a successful commercial fishermen and a leader in the fishing community. He rounds out the very impressive slate of candidates for the Rhode Island obligatory seat, and it is a pleasure and honor for me to recommend him for consideration.

In considering the candidacies of Mr. Platz and the other nominees, I, through the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, consulted with a range of individuals from Rhode Island's marine fishing community, including: Rick Bellavance, President, Rhode Island Party and Charter Boat Association; Christopher Brown, President, Rhode Island Commercial Fishermen's Association; Ryan Clark, Vice-President, The Town Dock, Inc.; Richard Fuka, President, Rhode Island Fishermen's Alliance; and David Preble, Member, New England Fishery Management Council.

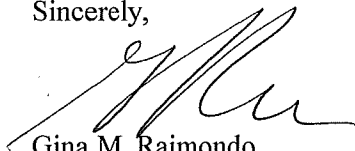
Ms. Sobeck
Page 5
March 13, 2015

Although the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management reached out to Rhode Island's entire marine fisheries community, broadly soliciting candidates for the two vacancies, we received no requests for consideration by any women or minorities. All of the candidates for the current vacancy were given full and equal consideration.

Finally, I am not submitting nominees for the one at-large vacancy on the New England Fishery Management Council.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Gina M. Raimondo
Governor